Fasting for Sensitivity and Power

Bill Rudge

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The Purpose of Fasting

Someone opposed to the idea of fasting once made the following statement:

> Fasting can be compared to a child holding his breath until his parents give him what he wants. When we fast we are telling God that we aren't going to eat until He answers our prayers.

This could not be further from the truth! Looking up every Scripture on fasting, I discovered that the primary purpose of fasting is to humble ourselves before the Lord. David said, "I…humbled myself with fasting" (Psalm 35:13). Ezra said, "I proclaimed a fast,

so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask Him for a safe journey" (Ezra 8:21). Joel said, "'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning'" (Joel 2:12).

When I fast and pray, I am not trying to manipulate God or force Him to do my will. Rather, I get on my knees in humility and dependence on the Lord, seeking to make my heart and spirit yielded and sensitive to Him. I want Him to lead, guide, direct and empower me to fulfill *His* purpose.

My strong desire to *know* Jesus Christ compels me to seek Him with all my heart through fasting, as well as in prayer and Scripture study. During fasting, I evaluate my life and ministry and seek the Lord's goals and direction. Has my will been replaced with His? Do I have the assurance of His Word and Spirit to be able to truthfully say to my board and staff: "The Lord has led me" to do this or that?

Sacrifice means to give up something that is important to you for something that is even more important. I need food to sustain my physical life, but the craving of my spirit to know God in a real and intimate way is more important to me than the natural craving for food. I desire instead that food of which

Jesus spoke: "I have food to eat that you know nothing about. My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work" (John 4:32, 34). Therefore, I present my body to the Lord as a *burnt offering* (Genesis 22:2) and a *living sacrifice* (Romans 12:1).

Most people want an easy formula or quick technique to know God's will and walk in His power and victory. However, I believe the scriptural requirements for those who really want to be used by God include commitment, obedience, discipline, perseverance, faithfulness, Bible study, prayer and fasting.

We cannot earn, through any effort of our own—including fasting—any right standing before God. Nevertheless, those who have right standing before God (totally by faith and the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ) are encouraged by Scripture to walk in obedience to the truth and principles of His Word and to seek God with all of their hearts.

If you want to…

- develop discipline in every area of your life
- overcome temptations and lustful thoughts
- bring the flesh under control
- achieve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual cleansing

- find more time for Bible study and prayer
- experience the Word of God coming alive in your life and ministry
- gain discernment and sensitivity to God's Spirit
- know that the Lord is your God; that nothing (not even the food you need to sustain life) has mastery over you or is more important to you than Him
- obtain spiritual power and victory

…then FAST!

Fasting is not merely a technique or method to receive the Lord's blessings. The Lord's blessings come from our obedience, not fasting. What fasting *does* is create humility and sensitivity. Through it we are motivated to know and obey God's will. When we walk in obedience, He greatly blesses us with His joy and peace, independent of our circumstances.

Biblical Examples

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God's people fasted. They fasted when they were humbling themselves before the Lord.

They fasted when they were confessing their sins and repenting. They fasted when they were mourning. They fasted when they faced crises and emergencies or suffered defeats. They fasted when they were seeking God's help or guidance. They fasted when they were given a special calling or stepping out on a special mission. They fasted when they were earnestly praying and seeking the Lord with all their hearts.

Moses fasted. David fasted. Elijah fasted. Daniel fasted. Esther fasted. Nehemiah fasted. Jesus fasted. Paul fasted. Many other Old and New Testament heroes of the faith, through whom God did great exploits, miracles and the seemingly impossible, fasted. Many throughout church history, whom God used to impact their world, fasted.

Some might say, "Jesus' disciples didn't fast!" (Mark 2:18). Yet Jesus said:

> How can the guests of the Bridegroom fast while He is with them? They cannot, so long as they have Him with them. But the time will come when the Bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast (Mark 2:19-20).

In Matthew 6:16, Jesus did not say, "If you fast," but, "When you fast." He cautioned not against fasting itself, but against fasting with wrong motives and improper methods:

> When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you (Matthew 6:16-18).

Other Biblical cautions from Zechariah, Jeremiah and Isaiah concerning fasting follow:

Zechariah 7:4-5:

> Then the word of the LORD Almighty came to me: "Ask all the people of the land and the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for Me that you fasted?'"

When we fast, we must be certain that it is not for self-centered reasons, but to truly seek to know the Lord and His will.

Jeremiah 14:10-12:

> This is what the LORD says about this people: "They greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the LORD does not accept them; He will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins." Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague."

If our lives are dishonoring the Lord, and we are not willing to repent and obey His Word, then our insincere fasting will be pointless.

Isaiah 58:3-9:

> "Why have we fasted," they say, "and You have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and You have not noticed?" Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and

exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: Here am I…

True fasting is more than just a time to abstain from food, but emanates from a life of obedience and faithfulness to the Lord, showing forth His love and truth.

Fasting and the First Missionary Outreach

The first missionary outreach began with fasting and prayer.

Acts 13:2-3 says:

> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

They received their call from the Holy Spirit while "they were worshiping the Lord and fasting." Afterwards, they fasted and prayed before placing their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sending them out. Most churches today do not pray *with fasting* when sending someone to the mission field or during a missions convention. Is this then something the church body should

reconsider? Are our missionaries being sent *not* in the full power of God, because church leadership has departed from the pattern of fasting and prayer *together*, established in Scripture?

In Acts 14:23 we read:

> Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

We need to get back the power and effectiveness the Church has lost from neglecting Biblical fasting. Fasting and prayer (along with the Word of God) make up one of the most powerful weapons that believers in Christ have. Just as Anna, a prophetess, worshiped night and day at the temple, fasting and praying (Luke 2:36-37), there is a growing number of believers throughout the world today who have a burden to fast and pray, diligently study His Word and seek the Lord with all their hearts.

Joel 1:14-15 is relevant for us:

> Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of

the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD. Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty."

Biblical Fasts

There are three main types of fasts in the Bible:

1. No food; only liquid. Immediately following the baptism of Jesus when the Spirit descended upon Him, the Spirit led Him into the wilderness "where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry" (Luke 4:1-2). It seems clear from the details given that our Lord's fast was one of abstaining from food, but not from water. We are told that He ate nothing but not that He drank nothing. Matthew 4:2 states, "After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry," but not that He was thirsty. Thirst is more intensive than hunger, yet Satan did

not tempt Him to drink, but to turn stones into bread.

2. No food and no liquid. We see in Scripture that Moses was on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from God. He prayed and fasted for 40 days with no food or water. Obviously, this was supernatural, since the human body cannot survive forty days without water, unless it is supernaturally sustained. Deuteronomy 9:9 states:

> When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the LORD had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water.

When Moses came down from the mountain, he saw the children of Israel sinning by worshipping the golden calf. Moses, in righteous anger, threw down the two stone tablets of the Covenant, shattering them into pieces (serving as a symbol that they had shattered the commandments God had just given). He went back up the mountain for another 40 days and 40 nights, refraining from food and water. Again, this was a miraculous fast. Deuteronomy 9:18 states:

> Then once again I fell prostrate before the LORD for forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all the sin you had committed, doing what was evil in the LORD's sight and so provoking Him to anger.

We see also that Elijah went without food or liquid for 40 days. After killing the prophets of Baal and fleeing from Jezebel, First Kings 19:5-8 reveals how Elijah received two meals which supernaturally strengthened him for 40 days and 40 nights:

> Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

Esther 4:16 recounts a *no food and no liquid* fast:

> Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.

Esther was facing a crisis of the possible extermination of the Jewish race. So she, her maids and the Jews in Susa went on a total fast, abstaining from food and liquid for three days. As we know from the Biblical account, God intervened and delivered in an amazing way.

Following Paul's Damascus Road experience, he did not eat or drink anything for three days (Acts 9:9).

The *no food and no water* fast should be limited to *no more than three days*. Even then, it can be potentially hazardous because the body will dehydrate quickly without any liquid intake.

3. The partial fast. We see that Daniel was involved in this type of fast twice in Scripture. After being taken into Babylonian captivity, Daniel was put into training to serve in the

king's palace. We read in Daniel 1:8-16 that Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, but instead to eat vegetables and drink water. The Hebrew word for "vegetables" probably refers to grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds as used in the following:

> At the end of the ten days they [Daniel and his three friends] looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead (Daniel 1:15-16).

Then we see in Daniel 10:2-3:

> At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

Both of Daniel's fasts were *partial fasts* in which he avoided certain foods.

My Fasting History

I was a "junk food junkie" most of my youth. However, at the age of thirty (January of 1983) I began fasting. I fasted primarily for spiritual reasons, but also for health. About once a week I would fast one meal, then increased to two meals and then three meals (one full day).

Before our ministry banquet in April of 1983, my wife, Karen, and I made a commitment to abstain from all sweets for one month as a *fast* unto the Lord. For one month, we ate nothing with refined white sugar in it. It was extremely difficult initially, but soon I felt great—calmer and with a much clearer mind. The Lord also greatly blessed the banquet.

On the very first day of May our covenant was over, so we went back to our regular

diet, eating sweets. Within a few days, I noticed that I was limping and my right knee was aching. After seeing firsthand (through this experience and in many other ways) what junk food was doing to us, Karen and I both realized the Lord was showing us how important it was to change our diet. Two days after again discontinuing foods with refined white sugar, my knee stopped aching. Later, I read in a health magazine there is a direct link between refined sugar, inflammation and arthritis.

In July of 1983, we bought a vegetable juicer and used it often when fasting. By October of 1983, Karen and I went to a nutritionist and began to completely change our diet.

Eventually, I added a two-day water fast, which means I ate no food and only drank distilled water. Gradually, I increased to seven days, and then ten. The longest I ever fasted on just liquids was 40 days—a tremendous feat considering I was already thin when I began.

My children always had limitations on their television viewing, but during some fasts, I started to include "no TV" for the whole family. It was the most peaceful atmosphere we have ever had. We watched videos of Bible heroes and historical heroes of the

faith and spent special time together in Bible study and prayer.

When my daughter and son became teenagers, I occasionally encouraged them to do a partial fast for one or two days, eating only raw fruits and vegetables. I was amazed at how bright their eyes and how clear their skin became.

During one week of fasting, Karen and I made a commitment not to say anything negative about anything or anyone. That was surprisingly hard, but beneficial.

On March 25, 1984, I began a 28-day fast. The purpose of the fast was for spiritual reasons, our ministry's upcoming annual banquet in April and to detoxify. During this four-week fast I drank distilled water and fruit and vegetable juices. A nutritionist told me that when detoxing, previous ailments temporarily manifest and, before many symptoms disappear, they often get worse.

The first few days, I developed a severe sore throat and swollen tonsils. I could hardly speak. An itchy rash appeared over most of my body which lessened by the fourth day. On the fourth day of the fast, I suffered from flu-like symptoms—lightheadedness, weakness, sneezing, runny nose and irritability. About the fifth or sixth day, I began to feel great. I drank only distilled water on the

ninth and tenth day and was extremely weak, but I still ran fitness classes and shoveled and raked large piles of gravel in the ministry's driveway.

Around the tenth day, I began craving junk food. I told Karen: "Bring on the candy bars and the cake and ice cream." Resisting the urge, it passed in a few hours. On the 11th day, I started including fruit and vegetable juices again and felt great. On the 14th day, I spoke at a church, and afterwards the pastor took my wife and me out to eat at a restaurant where they had a huge salad bar and steaks. I only had two glasses of pineapple juice.

About the 21st day, I finally noticed small areas of my tongue turning pink (previously coated with yellow and gray). By the 28th day, much of my tongue was light pink, but only the tip and the back of my tongue was a bright, healthy pink (it would take several more years of periodic fasting before my total tongue would become a bright pink).

I felt the weakest, but obtained the best cleansing when I was on just distilled water. The detoxification process and symptoms were less severe when I was on fruit and vegetable juices along with water. I could somewhat identify with Paul in a cold, damp prison because I was always cold, probably from being so thin and having no food

intake. I could also identify with David in Psalm 109:24:

> My knees are weak from fasting; and my flesh has grown lean, without fatness (NASB).

There were times when I could hardly stand up and there was no fat on my flesh. I lost 25 pounds and my body weight went down to 125 pounds (my thinnest ever). Food never tasted so good as it did when I started eating again. I believe God led me on that fast and I am thankful I went on it, but I never want to fast that long again. I paid the price and achieved my goal. God also restored much health to my body through the detoxing process. I learned that if the Lord can give me the determination and discipline to go 28 days without food, He can empower me to do anything. Through this experience, I developed more sensitivity to the Lord and others. Our banquet proved to be the best to that date. I also learned that it takes time to correct the consequences from a lifetime of poor choices and bad eating habits.

In April of 1988, I decided to go on a week-long fruit fast during which I would eat nothing but fruit and drink nothing but fruit juices and distilled water. It was one of

the hardest fasts I have ever been on. My hips were in excruciating pain (probably from past karate injuries or hip joint wear from so many side kicks). For three nights, the pain was so severe that I was unable to sleep. I laid in bed trying to find a comfortable position which eluded me. I was very weak from such rapid detoxing.

To make matters worse, I had to organize and direct two back-to-back Ultimate R.I.O.T.s (Ridiculous, Interesting, Outstanding and Terrific), which are high intensity, fast-paced events involving hundreds of youth. I made it through them and they were a great success. Many have said that participating in our R.I.O.T. was the most exciting team competition in which they were ever engaged. While burning refrigerator boxes and newspapers following the last R.I.O.T., the smoke engulfed me. It caused me to have severe congestion. I could hardly breathe while sleeping. For many days my eyes burned and I coughed up phlegm. But I was determined to achieve my goal and commitment of fulfilling this week-long fruit fast and with the Lord's help, I did. (However, I never did a complete fruit fast again.)

In November of 1989, I was scheduled to leave with my son and a friend for the ministry's first India outreach. A week before

our departure the visas—which should have come two weeks earlier—still had not arrived. A call from India indicating that our flight from Delhi to Bagdogra in the Himalayan Mountains (where I was to speak at an international convention) had been canceled due to an engineers' strike. Along with several other obstacles, we faced an impossible situation—yet I knew the Lord had led us to go.

My *Adventures in Missions* records include the following:

> I read the whole book of Esther last night, and I am on this Esther fast [no food or liquid for three days] because of the impossible situation I am in. I believe this is the first time I have been on a fast with no liquids and it is rough, especially since I am so busy. With weakness and aching of body, I spent much time in the Word and in prayer—and then I got several radio broadcasts completed and did other work preparing messages for India, writing newsletters, etc., so I could leave. I usually fast with liquids because I believe that is the healthy way to do it. I cannot afford to lose any more weight before India, but the Lord has led me to this type of

fast—so we will see how the Lord intervenes.

He did intervene in remarkable ways and resolved all obstacles. The Lord also greatly anointed the messages and protected us.

When my daughter, her husband and their three children were moving from California to Pennsylvania, there were many challenges. I went on a *Daniel fast* (vegetables, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, seeds and some fruit, but no meat, poultry, fish, dairy, desserts or cooked foods) for the entire month of November 2004, including Thanksgiving. I drank only purified water and nutritional drinks. I had great energy and everything worked out perfectly. We witnessed tremendous victories in the midst of some difficult situations.

Throughout the years I have implemented a diversity of fasts with a variety of time lengths. Each one was for a special purpose and always as a reminder of my utter dependence upon the Lord.

In August of 2020 I felt the Lord impressing on my heart to do a 30-day fast for September. Instead of just water I decided to drink any kind of liquids since I could not afford to lose much more weight and needed strength for a busy ministry schedule

including several obstacle course events and family activities.

The first day of my fast (September 1) happened to be a Tuesday, the busiest and longest day for me at the ministry center. Later that evening it hit me that I still have almost an entire month ahead of not eating. Being a little concerned I said to myself, "You got through the first day so you can get through day two and so on." Looking at it one day at a time made it less stressful. Besides, it would be far less in comparison to the training my grandson would be going through in trying out for the Special Forces.

The main purpose for this 30 day fast was because I wanted the reality of Ephesians 1:17— "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better." I know the Lord still has much more for me to do and I want to maintain my health and vitality and have His anointing. It was also to pray for Carson (who was leaving for the Navy) and granddaughter Moriah (who was facing a fifth ankle surgery) as well as my entire family, ministry staff and supporters and our nation.

The day before I began my September fast I was informed my 18-year-old grandson would be leaving for the Navy on September

28 instead of after Christmas as previously indicated. A week before he left, my wife and I went with him and his family to a special restaurant. Carson's six-year-old sister, Delaney, asked me why I wasn't eating. I responded that I was fasting and of course she wanted to know why. I said, "You will not understand so I will explain it when you get older." She replied, "Papa, Lily (her 16 year-old sister who is highly intelligent) tells me lots of things I don't understand." I said, "OK, Moses, David, Daniel and others fasted to get closer to God. That is why I am doing it." She said, "Oh, I understand."

Near the end of September I decided to extend my fast 10 more days for a total of 40 days. Karen joined me on October 1 for the additional 10-day liquid fast. At the end of the 40 days I only weighed 144 pounds but what I gained spiritually was well worth it. My first solid food was an apple. It was wonderful to chew food again.

Over the years, I have faced numerous, seemingly impossible, circumstances. The only recourse I often had was to fast. God has done some amazing things which are recorded in my journals, *The Impossible* and *Adventures In Missions*. Almost every miracle I have witnessed in my life and ministry has come during, or following (sometimes

months after), a time of fasting and prayer. Do realize, however, the Lord has not always answered my prayers in the way I had hoped. Many times, He merely changed my heart and attitude and strengthened me to persevere through the difficulties and circumstances.

Types of Fasts

Weekly Fast

For several years, I fasted one day every week, spending time on my knees, seeking the Lord and praying through my fasting lists. This was of great benefit and enabled me to assimilate the Biblical principles of my fasting lists into my spiritual life. It also helped to discipline and transform every area of my life. During this one-day-a-week fast, I often read through a whole book of the Bible, which helped to renew my mind with God's Word.

Usually, I still fast one day a week (all or part of Sunday and/or Monday) as I spend time with the Lord and pray through my

Current Fasting list. Sometimes, I drink only purified water during my weekly fast. At other times, I will include lemon water, vegetable protein drinks, juices or raw vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds.

Spontaneous Fast

Occasionally, I go on what I call a *spontaneous fast* for one to three days (or longer) when:

- I feel the need to separate myself for a special time of fasting and prayer.
- The Lord lays it on my heart.
- I need to make a crucial decision.
- I am facing challenging or impossible circumstances.
- I am facing a health challenge or injury.

In this case, I will fast for as long as I feel is necessary or as long as the Lord leads.

January Fast

At the beginning of January, I fast for a week or more as I review and pray through

my *Personal Prayer and Fasting, Family Prayer and Fasting,* and *Ministry Prayer and Fasting* lists. This is an intense and special time of prayer and Scripture study to seek the Lord's direction and goals for my life and ministry for the coming year.

Similar to the principle of lifting weights, I tear myself down physically, emotionally and spiritually through fasting the beginning of January—only to be rebuilt—stronger for the new year.

I pray through my *Personal Prayer and Fasting* list alone, but Karen often joins me to pray through the *Family Prayer and Fasting* and the *Ministry Prayer and Fasting* lists. Several family members and staff also fast in January.

Seven Day Fast

Instead of drinking only liquids during my January fast, the following procedure has been both effective and beneficial for me:

- **1st day**—raw fruits and vegetables, raw nuts and seeds and any kind of liquid such as vegetable and fruit juice (diluted with equal amounts of purified water), vegetable protein drink,

lemon water (juice from three freshly squeezed lemons in 64 ounces of purified water), pure water

- **2nd day**—raw fruits and vegetables and any kind of liquid
- **3rd day**—any kind of liquid
- **4th day**—purified water only
- **5th day**—any kind of liquid
- **6th day**—raw fruits and vegetables and any kind of liquid
- **7th day**—raw fruits and vegetables, raw nuts and seeds and any kind of liquid

If I want to extend the fast, I can increase the number of any of these days. Another option is to follow the protocol for just one of the days for the entire duration of my fast.

Sunday to Friday Fast

Another fast I designed carries me from Sunday night to Friday night. I eat only raw fruits and vegetables, raw nuts and seeds and liquids. On the weekend, I may include any other kind of wholesome food. This type of fast may be continued for weeks—especially during harvest (August and September)

when fresh fruits and vegetables are abundant in western Pennsylvania.

Intermittent Fasting

Sometimes for weeks or months I do intermittent *fasting*, not consuming any food (only liquids) between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and noon. This 16-hour *fast* not only heightens physical discipline and self-control but has provided me with several health and spiritual benefits.

No Television Fast

One of my favorite "fasts" was when the family abstained from television for a week to a month, or longer. Now, the "no television fast" is a daily lifestyle.

Establishing Your Own Fast

My fasting procedure and nutritional lifestyle have derived from studying Scripture, doing research and through personal experience. The Lord has led me this way because of the type of ministry I am in and the kind of

relationship I desire with Him. In no way do I infer that you should imitate my format. Seek the Lord and do further research. Consult a health professional and establish what is best for you.

The Big Three

1. My Nutritional Diet

In March of 1989 during a time of prayer and fasting, I sought the Lord concerning what He wanted me to do regarding nutrition. Should I continue to be strict, go for a more moderate approach or just eat…"whatever"? The Lord impressed upon me that—if I wanted the kind of health, energy, vitality and *obedient* relationship with Him I was seeking—I should be *totally* committed in this area as well as in all other areas of my life.

My life principle concerning nutrition is found in James 4:17:

> Anyone, then, who knows the good
> he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

I committed to the Lord that, with His wisdom and empowerment, I would live by this principle of eating what I know to be profitable and avoiding what is not—just common sense. However, in some situations like an overseas mission trip, etc., it may be better to eat what is available, rather than not eat anything at all. I evaluate my circumstances, and determine what is the best choice. Again—common sense.

2. My Mental Diet

Concerning the *mental* diet, my guiding principle is found in Philippians 4:8:

> Finally, brothers, whatever is true,
> whatever is noble, whatever is right,
> whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,
> whatever is admirable—if anything
> is excellent or praiseworthy—think
> about such things.

Therefore, I made a commitment to only watch, read and listen to that which is profitable. Instead of merely avoiding that which is bad for me, I evaluate what is beneficial.

3. My Spiritual Diet

Spiritually, I determined to read the Word and pray three times a day. Daniel and David were my inspiration for this (Daniel 6:10-13; Psalm 55:16-17). Some days, this consists of intensive Bible study and prayer, and other days of merely reading a few verses and offering a brief prayer to the Lord, asking for His help, and acknowledging that He is the Source of all that I need.

Reaching Our Maximum Potential

To achieve our maximum potential in Christ, we must develop "balanced lives." Physically, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and should be "living sacrifices"—totally committed to the Lord in every aspect for His honor and glory. Mentally, our minds are to be renewed by God's Word—transformed by His Spirit as we bring every thought captive to obedience to Jesus Christ and as we focus and dwell on that which is true, honorable and praiseworthy. Emotionally, we must replace destructive emotions such as hate, revenge, bitterness,

pride…with the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace… Spiritually, we are created in God's image and are to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, walking in the Spirit, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit and operating the gifts of the Spirit.

May our desire be to serve the Lord wholeheartedly for our whole life with our whole being—body, mind and spirit.

My Bible Study Format

When I begin a new book of the Bible, I like to read the entire book straight through or listen to it on an audio recording to get a summary. Then I go back and reread it chapter by chapter and contemplate its meaning. I meditate on each verse, like a cow chewing its cud, trying to assimilate it into my spiritual lifeblood. During this second reading, I do background research, examine corresponding Scripture references and sometimes use a commentary or other reference material. It might take me a month or more to go through one book of the Bible in this manner. Then I reread the entire book straight through again. This is an effective way to learn and remember Scripture.

By following this procedure, God's truth and principles have come alive in my mind, my heart and my life. When I take time for Bible study and prayer, the Lord seems to multiply my time and the day usually goes much better for me.

God Wants Firstfruits, Not Lastfruits

It was on the third day of my January 2009 fast as I was strategizing when to begin my intense Scripture study and prayer time that the Lord spoke to my heart. I was also contemplating how to focus even more time on Bible study and prayer each day in the midst of a hectic ministry schedule that included many projects we have been attempting to finish for several years.

Suddenly, and unexpectedly, the Lord spoke to my heart: "I do not want the lastfruits; I want the firstfruits." It was crystal clear. He was not asking for what was left over after all my deadlines, meetings and helping everyone in need was accomplished, He wants the firstfruits. He desires the "choice portion" of my time each day.

Life has a way of overwhelming us. But it is good to be reminded to quiet our hearts

and seek Him each day. As we make Him the priority of our lives, He will teach us what is really most important and reveal to us new and wondrous things by His Word and Spirit.

Fasting Procedures

The Four-Phase Fast

From experience, I have realized that there are four phases to an extended fast. In fasting for a few meals or a few days, I experienced only the initial stages. But when fasting for 28 days, I experienced all four.

The first phase is overcoming *psychological dependence*. During the first few days of a fast, I often have a craving for food.

The second phase brings a feeling of *physical weakness*, which may last for several days. Some things I experience in the weakness stage of my fasts are:

- coated tongue and unpleasant taste in my mouth
- bad breath
- body odor
- difficulty sleeping
- dizziness / lightheadedness
- fatigue
- feeling the cold in an increased way throughout my body and extremities (hands and feet)
- headache
- hunger pangs
- irritability
- nausea
- weakness

In many respects, this is the most difficult phase of the fast and it is necessary to rest whenever possible. The gradual disappearance of this feeling of weakness is a signal that the body has eliminated its grosser wastes and toxins.

In the third phase, *strength returns* with little or no concern for food, and only occasional times of weakness. At this stage of fasting I feel I could continue my fast indefinitely without much effort. I have energy, mental clarity and an improved memory.

The fourth phase is the *starvation phase*. Going on a "complete fast," my body begins to hunger again. If I do not end the fast, I would enter into a starvation phase.

Arthur Wallis, in his book, *God's Chosen Fast*, states:

> The appearance of hunger is thus the warning bell announcing that the body is beginning to starve. In certain cases this may occur as early as the twenty-first day, but very often it is not till the fortieth day, or even long after. From the commencement of the fast till hunger returns is sometimes called *the complete fast*.

Managing The Fast

When fasting, it is helpful to get away and go into the mountains, woods or an isolated cabin—just to get away from people and distractions. However, it has not always been practical for me. A family who needs me and the responsibilities of a growing ministry make it difficult to get away for very long; so I sometimes "escape" to the other office in my house during the day or to the ministry center's prayer room at night, and do my praying there.

Not eating or preparing my usual meals and salads gives me an extra hour or so a day to read the Word and pray. Abstaining from television provides even more time. This in itself is a tremendous blessing. When I am fasting I attempt to:

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink an abundance of liquids. Drinking fruit and vegetable juices (unless only on water) supplies energy, vitamins, minerals, live enzymes and other essential nutrients. Although a distilled-water fast gives me a tremendous cleansing, the detoxification process is much more gradual and gentle on a juice fast.
- Walk in fresh air and sunshine daily
- Get mild exercise
- Take a warm shower daily
- Brush my tongue frequently to remove coating
- Limit distractions and interruptions
- Extensively study at least one book of the Bible
- Spend as much time in prayer, praise and meditating on God's Word as possible

Married couples should consider abstaining from sexual relations while fasting. Paul admonishes spouses not to deprive each other of sexual fulfillment, except by mutual consent for a time, so that they may devote themselves to prayer (1 Corinthians 7:5). *Adam Clarke's Commentary* says to abstain:

> only for a certain time, when prudence dictates the temporary separation, or when some extraordinary spiritual occasion may render it mutually agreeable, in order that you may fast and pray, and derive the greatest possible benefit from these duties by being enabled to wait on the Lord without distraction.

Begin Gradually

I recommend that anyone who has not fasted before to start gradually. Begin by avoiding *certain* foods, *limiting* food intake to just fruits and vegetables, or by fasting just *one meal*. Then, gradually increase the length of your fast to one or more days, if so desired.

Please note: If you are diabetic, pregnant, nursing, taking any kind of medication, have any other physical conditions that might

make fasting dangerous, or if you are going on an extended fast for more than one day, it is important to consult a *health professional* to evaluate your physical condition and determine the length and type of fast that is most beneficial. If you are undernourished or living in an impoverished country where it is difficult to obtain adequate food, please use wisdom in fasting. Modify as needed.

Use Wisdom

In my early days, I would fast right before and during important speaking engagements and special events. However, I was often weakened and not as effective as I could have been. The Lord used the following Scripture to show me the wisdom of fasting before or after the actual "battle"—not usually in the midst of it.

1 Samuel 14:24-30:

> Now the men of Israel were in distress
> that day, because Saul had bound
> the people under an oath, saying,
> "Cursed be any man who eats food
> before evening comes, before I have
> avenged myself on my enemies!"
> So none of the troops tasted food.

> The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground. When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out, yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath. But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be any man who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint." Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

Instead of fasting from *food* during speaking engagements, I usually abstain from television in the hotel room in which I am staying. This enables me to maintain my

physical strength while keeping my focus on the Lord and the message He has called me to proclaim.

End Slowly

When should you end your fast? I adhere to these few principles:

I predetermine an ending to the fast or continue until the Lord gives me release—a confirmation that it is time to break the fast. On an extended fast, a pink tongue or return of appetite are indicators that I should discontinue the fast.

The *longer* I fast, the *slower* I come off it. For every day I spend on a liquid fast, I spend at least half that many days gradually returning to my normal diet. At first, I drink (sipped at intervals throughout the day) fresh vegetable and fruit juices, tea, broth, vegetable protein drinks, etc. Then, I gradually introduce fresh fruits and vegetables and raw nuts and seeds. I eat small amounts, slowly and thoroughly chewed. Finally, I return to my normal healthy diet.

Physical Restoration

Along with the tremendous spiritual benefits, there are some amazing physical and mental benefits. Over time, the body builds up toxins from chemicals, pollution, overindulgence and the stresses of life. Fasting detoxifies the body. It is a natural way for me to cleanse and rejuvenate my body and strengthen my immune system.

Before I started fasting and getting into nutrition at the age of 30, my health was eroding. I was developing various physical problems: I was losing my eyesight; my memory was failing; my equilibrium was deteriorating; I was getting dizzy and lightheaded. I had several other chronic symptoms and I believed I was on the verge of developing diabetes or cancer. I was told the

health problems I was facing were irreversible. The indulgent and injurious lifestyle of my younger years was finally catching up with me.

So I prayed, "Lord, if You want me in the ministry, I need Your help." I am convinced that the Lord honored that earnest prayer by leading me into fasting and nutrition. As a result, I have seen tremendous benefits from obeying His Biblical principles of health and fitness. Some of the ailments and issues began to improve within a few months, but others took years to overcome. Some of them even appeared to get worse before they improved. I noticed that the symptoms which manifested earliest in my life took the longest to clear up.

I very rarely get sick anymore, except perhaps after an extensive missions trip, or when under extreme stress, or eating something I should not. When I feel *something* coming on, I try to slow down my pace, rest, exercise moderately (by walking more and doing light workouts), go on a brief fast, drink plenty of liquids, eat primarily raw fruits and vegetables and take additional nutritional supplements until I recover.

Those who think they are free to eat all the junk food they want soon discover that they are not free but enslaved. Let them try to stop indulging and they will see what bondage

they are actually in; either they cannot or it is extremely difficult. Some may say, "You are in bondage because you are trying to live naturally and will not indulge." I am not in bondage; they are in bondage. I was set free; now I can choose to eat or abstain. The addicted have no choice. They have to have their junk food or they literally go through withdrawal symptoms and become depressed and irritable.

I have heard supposedly "spiritual" Christians say, "I don't have to worry about what I eat. I just pray that the Lord blesses it to my body." But I reply, "No one is so spiritual that he or she is exempt from God's natural laws of health, any more than they are exempt from God's other physical laws. It would be ridiculous to be flying in a plane, then open the door and step out, thinking you can violate the natural law of gravity. Equally ridiculous would be to walk in front of a speeding car to see if you are exempt from God's natural law of kinetic motion."

Who would be foolish enough to try either of these? Yet, many Christians and Christian leaders are needlessly suffering from the consequences of being undisciplined, overindulgent and violating God's natural health laws. God is calling for a body of believers who will walk in discipline and self-control, reaping

victory in every area of their lives: physically, mentally, emotionally, and above all, spiritually. We are not to be mastered by anything or anyone but Him.

"Impossible" Situations

Throughout Scripture and more recent history, the people of God have faced insurmountable circumstances and obstacles. When they humbled themselves and sought the Lord with all their hearts, through prayer and fasting, He often intervened in miraculous ways to deliver His people.

I can testify that what was written in the Bible thousands of years ago is true today. I have witnessed the God of the Bible do some awesome things in my life and ministry more times and ways than could possibly be mere coincidence. I have documented in my personal records numerous accounts of supernatural intervention in the midst

of impossible situations, as well as many of the lessons the Lord has taught me throughout the years. *The Impossible* (a record of my life and ministry) and *Adventures In Missions* (a record of my many mission trips) are laced with miraculous accounts of what has occurred as a result of fasting, persistent prayer, faith and obedience.

"Crying Out" to the Lord

There is power in prayer when we *cry out* to the Lord. I have cried out to Him with all my heart in the midst of desperate and hopeless circumstances—knowing He is my only hope. He has been faithful to either resolve the situation or empower me to stand and endure.

There are many verses on crying out to the Lord. Consider the following:

Exodus 2:23:

> During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God.

Exodus 14:10:

> As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there

were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD.

Exodus 17:4:

Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

Judges 3:9:

But when they cried out to the LORD, He raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them.

Judges 3:15:

Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and He gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite….

Judges 10:10:

Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against You, forsaking our God and serving the Baals."

1 Samuel 15:11:

> "I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from Me and has not carried out My instructions." Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the LORD all that night.

1 Chronicles 5:20:

> They were helped in fighting them, and God handed the Hagrites and all their allies over to them, because they cried out to Him during the battle. He answered their prayers, because they trusted in Him.

Nehemiah 9:27:

> So You handed them over to their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to You. From heaven You heard them, and in Your great compassion You gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies.

Nehemiah 9:28:

> But as soon as they were at rest, they again did what was evil in

> Your sight. Then You abandoned them to the hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them. And when they cried out to You again, You heard from heaven, and in Your compassion You delivered them time after time.

Psalm 34:17:

> The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles.

Psalm 40:1:

> I waited patiently for the LORD; He turned to me and heard my cry.

Jonah 2:1-2:

> From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and He answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and You listened to my cry."

Matthew 15:22:

> A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out,

> "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!…"

Luke 18:7:

> And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off?

Cries Not Heard by the Lord

The Lord will not hear the cries of those who rebel and disobey and serve other gods, but He does hear the prayer of those crying out from a heart of repentance, humility and obedience.

Jeremiah 11:10-12:

> They have returned to the sins of their forefathers, who refused to listen to My words. They have followed other gods to serve them. Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant I made with their forefathers. Therefore this is what the Lord says: "I will bring on them

> a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them. The towns of Judah and the people of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they will not help them at all when disaster strikes."

Micah 3:4:

> Then they will cry out to the LORD, but He will not answer them. At that time He will hide His face from them because of the evil they have done.

It is imperative we cry out to the Lord with hearts of repentance, attitudes of humility and lives of obedience. Then He will hear our cries and deliver us in some incredible ways.

Dynamic Principles of Prayer

After searching Scripture for God's perspective on prayer, I compiled the following nine dynamic biblical principles on prayer which should be considered when you are fasting and praying. You can read these in just a few minutes. It will be worth your time as God's Spirit enlightens your heart through His Word—giving you insight concerning one of the most beneficial practices in life—Prayer! Be blessed as you engage in some Bible study by reflecting on each one of the following verses:

1) Right Motives

James 4:3:

You ask and do not receive,

because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

2) According to His Will

1 John 5:14:

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

3) Persistence

Luke 11:5-10:

And He said to them, "Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him;' and from inside he shall answer and say, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he

needs. And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened."

4) Do Not Doubt

James 1:6-7:

But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.

Hebrews 11:1, 6:

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

5) Mountain-Moving Faith

Mark 9:23:

And Jesus said to him, "If you

can?" All things are possible to him who believes.

Mark 11:23:

Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be taken up and cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him.

6) Do Not Be Anxious—Be Thankful

Philippians 4:6-7:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 4:2:

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.

7) Obedience

John 14:14-15:

> If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

John 15:7:

> If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.

1 John 3:21-24:

> Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

8) A Clean Heart before God

2 Chronicles 6:36-39:

> When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to a land far off or near, if they take thought in the land where they are taken captive, and repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, "We have sinned, we have committed iniquity and have acted wickedly"; if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been taken captive, and pray toward their land which You have given to their fathers and the city which You have chosen, and toward the house which I have built for Your name, then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, their prayer and supplications, and maintain their cause and forgive Your people who have sinned against You.

2 Chronicles 7:14:

> [If] My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Psalm 66:18:

> If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

Isaiah 1:15-17:

> So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you…even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

James 5:16-18:

> Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The

> effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

9) Delight Yourself in the Lord

Psalm 37:4:

> Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 84:11:

> No good thing does He [the LORD] withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Matthew 6:33:

> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

Powerful Prayers in Scripture

The Lord has taught me that I cannot coerce or manipulate Him to give me what I want. However, if I delight myself in Him, seek to Honor His name and walk in obedience, He will grant the desires of my heart (because they will be His desires as well) and abundantly bless beyond what I could ever ask or think.

Seven powerful prayers (two of which were accompanied by fasting) which should serve as an example and inspiration to us can be found in Scripture. Take time to study them and be inspired by their example of faith:

1. Elijah's brief, but effective prayer during his encounter with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:36-37).
2. David's magnificent prayer of thanks and praise to bless the LORD in response to an astounding offering of wealth toward the building of the Temple. David acknowledges that everything—including riches and honor—comes from the LORD (1 Chronicles 29:10-20).
3. Solomon's powerful prayer at the dedication of the Temple, acknowledging God's faithfulness and sovereignty—His punishment of sin and His forgiveness and restoration for repentance (2 Chronicles 6:13-42).
4. Daniel's intercessory prayer of forgiveness for the people and for Jerusalem's restoration after receiving understanding from Scripture—seeking the LORD God by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes (Daniel 9:3-19).
5. Nehemiah's persistent prayer (after many days of mourning and fasting) for favor in the presence of Artaxerxes, king of Persia (Nehemiah 1:4-11).

6. Hezekiah's earnest prayer in the Temple after receiving the threatening letter from Sennacherib, king of Assyria, demanding Jerusalem's surrender (Isaiah 37:14-20).
7. The early Church's courageous prayer following the release of Peter and John (Acts 4:23-31).

Personal, Family, and Ministry Prayer and Fasting Lists

Prayer and fasting are powerful! They have been vital factors in my life as obstacles have been overcome, the impossible made possible, victories won, strongholds broken down and lives changed. Just as in biblical times, the God of the Bible hears the cries of His people today. He helps those who trust in Him and answers prayer according to His preeminent purpose.

I have three different prayer and fasting lists that I systematically review before the Lord. I do this while praying on my knees (sometimes with hands raised), sitting on the

floor, resting in a chair or lying on a decline board.

For many hours at the beginning of January I go through my prayer and fasting lists, evaluating every area of my life and ministry. If I am going to be the man God wants me to be, I must have my will broken and my heart surrendered and sensitive to Him. I refuse to be a fake, as my family and those closest to me will testify. I strive to live in private, as well as public, what I speak on, write about and share over radio and the Internet.

My **Personal Development Prayer and Fasting** list provides a crucial time and wonderful opportunity for me to reflect on, reevaluate and reinforce in my life what the Lord has taught me over the years. Many of my strengths today were once overwhelming weaknesses. As the Lord has purified and refined my life, He has enabled me to conquer them and make me stronger in Him. Then I have a **Family Prayer and Fasting** list and finally, a **Ministry Prayer and Fasting** list which covers virtually every aspect of our multifaceted ministry.

These fasting lists I have developed throughout the years reveal what I believe God's Word and Spirit desire of me. I have grieved many times when, either initially recording them or reviewing them, I have

had to say, "Lord, I didn't achieve Your standard." When that happens, instead of giving up and saying, "Well, I guess I need to accept myself this way," I say, "Lord, crucify this out of my life. Do not allow me to tolerate it. By Your Spirit burn it out of me and help me to overcome it."

Here are some excerpts from the outlines I use for my fasting lists. What I have developed before the Lord over the years are not intended for you to copy but to merely give you some ideas. You need to develop your own. These are idealistic—but obtainable—goals that I aspire to because I have evaluated them in Scripture, had them impressed on my heart by the Holy Spirit or witnessed them in the lives of heroes of the faith. I believe they reflect the Biblical principles, attitudes, desires and goals God wants us to have.

Personal Development Prayer and Fasting List

My Source and Strength

The following confessions of faith have heartfelt meaning in my relationship with Christ. They are frequently part of my prayer and fasting time:

- I praise, thank and worship You because You are the CREATOR and Sovereign Lord of the Universe; ELOHIM, the strong and faithful One; ADONAI, Master and Lord; YAHWEH, the Great I Am; KING of Kings and LORD of Lords…
- You are Holy, Righteous, Just, Faithful, True, Loving, Kind, Merciful, Long-Suffering…
- You are my Source and Strength, my God and King, my Savior and Messiah, my Lord and Master, my Creator and Sustainer, my Rock and Fortress, my Defender and Deliverer, my Shield and Sword, my Protector and Provider, my Helper and Healer…
- Everything in all creation belongs to You. All I have is through Your provision. All I accomplish is by Your Spirit. All the truth I have learned is from Your wisdom. All I will ever be is because of Your mercy and grace.

My desire and prayer is to:

- Walk with You like Enoch (Genesis 5:22-24).
- Be considered Your friend like

Abraham (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23).

- Be considered Your servant like Moses (Joshua 1:2).
- Have a heart after You like David (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22).
- Be obedient like Jesus (Philippians 2:8; Romans 5:19; Hebrews 5:8).
- Be a faithful witness like Antipas (Revelation 2:13).

Now read all the above once again slowly as you ponder and pray about each description of God and what He means in your heart and life. Then give the Lord your praise, thanks and worship because He is truly worthy!

Search My Heart

- Forgive me for any worry, doubt, unbelief, fear, jealousy, greed, lust, deception, pride…and replace them with faith, trust, courage, love, forgiveness, generosity, control, integrity, humility…
- Crucify anything in me that is not of You or dishonors or displeases You
- May the thoughts and attitudes of my mind, the emotions, desires, goals, dreams, vision and motives of my

heart, the words of my mouth and my behavior and lifestyle be pleasing in Your sight

Failures in the Bible

- Baalam—Personal gain—Let me not use Your gifts for personal gain but for Your honor and glory (Numbers 22:7; 2 Peter 2:15-16; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14)
- Korah and Dathan—Opposed Moses and rebelled—Dathan plotted with Korah, Abiram and On to overthrow Moses—They took advantage of the dissatisfaction among the tribes and were ready to lead a revolt until God judged them by the earth opening and swallowing them (Numbers 16:1-33; Deuteronomy 11:6; Psalm 106:17)
- 10 spies—Unbelief, murmur and complain—Disbelieved God's promise, undermined the good report of Joshua and Caleb, caused the people to grumble, rebel, disobey and wander in the wilderness for 40 years (Numbers 13:25-14:35)
- Samson—Lust and foolishness led to his demise (Judges 16:1-31)
- Saul—Pride, jealousy, impatience and disobedience caused his fall (1 Samuel

13:1-14; 15:1-35; 18:6-9; 28:4-25; 31:1-13)

- Solomon—Lust compromised his devotion to the Lord and his foreign wives turned his heart after other gods so that the Lord tore the kingdom out of his son's hand and raised up an adversary against Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-14)
- Ahab (king of Israel)—Influenced by Jezebel in rebellion and wickedness before the Lord (1 Kings 16:30-33; 21:4-26)
- Jezebel—Infected God's people (Israel) with idolatry and false teaching (1 Kings 18:4, 19; 21:25; 2 Kings 9:22; Revelation 2:20-23)
- Ananias and his wife Sapphira—Deception and lies cost them their lives (Acts 5:1-10)
- Herod Agrippa 1—Pride and not giving God the glory—An angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory (Acts 12:21-23)

Heroes of the Bible

- Faith and obedience of Noah and Abraham (Genesis 6:13-22; 15:6; 22:1-18; Hebrews 11:7-19)

- Self-control and honoring You like Joseph (Genesis 39:2-12; 45:4-5; Hebrews 11:22)
- Meekness and leadership of Moses (Numbers 12:3; Hebrews 11:24-29)
- Courage and zeal of Joshua (Exodus 17:13; Numbers 14:6-9; 27:18-21; 32:11-12; Deuteronomy 3:28; 31:7-8, 23; Joshua 3:5-7; 4:9-10; 6:27; 7:6, 19-25; 8:1-3, 28-30, 34-35; 10:6-9, 24-26, 40-42; 11:10-15, 23; 24:1-15)
- Loyalty of Ruth (Ruth 1:16-17)
- Strength of Caleb (Joshua 14:6-14) and Samson (Judges 16:3, 9, 12, 14, 28-30)
- Fervent prayer, faith and obedience of Hannah (1Samuel 1:10-2:11)
- Accuracy of Samuel because You let none of his words fall to the ground (1 Samuel 3:19)
- Heart of David to continually seek and praise You (1 Samuel 13:14; Psalm 5:7-8; 9:1-2; 18:1-3; 34:1-4; 51:1-12; 100:1-5; 119:1-176; Acts 13:22)
- Wisdom of Solomon concerning Your creation and life (1 Kings 4:29-34; 10:1-9; Proverbs 1:1-7)
- Spirit and power of Elijah to oppose spiritual adultery and turn the hearts

of the people back to You (1 Kings 18:37)

- Faithfulness and perseverance of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:1-19; 15:15-17; 20:1-11; Lamentations 3:19-26)
- Courage and willingness of Esther to risk her life for the sake of God's people (Esther 4:15-17)
- Discipline, integrity and courage of Daniel (Daniel 1:8, 17-20; 2:26-28; 5:17-23; 6:4-23; 10:2-3; Ezekiel 14:12-14, 20)
- Faith, grace, power, boldness and forgiveness of Stephen (Acts 6:5-7:60) and so full of the Spirit like Stephen that my face radiates You (Acts 6:15)—"A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5; 7:55)—"Full of God's grace and power" (Acts 6:8)—His face shone like an angel when he appeared before the Council (Acts 6:15)
- Speak powerfully like Apollos (Acts 18:28)
- Commitment, determination, discernment and power of Paul (Acts 9:3-16; 14:8-22; 16:16-18, 25-26; 19:8; 20:9-12; 21:13-14; 27:21-25; 28:1-9; 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 6:4-10; 11:23-12:10; Philippians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 3:10-11)

- Faithfulness and revelation of John (Matthew 17:1-2; John 19:26-27; Revelation 1:9-19)
- CONFORM TO IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF JESUS CHRIST (Romans 8:29)

Lordship of Christ

- You are my Lord—I have no will but to do Your will and no right but to do what is right in Your eyes—I own no possessions for all I have is Yours
- Let me not contend with You or resist but submit and yield to You
- Mold and make me into the man You want me to be
- Fulfill Your will and purpose in my life, marriage, family and ministry

Wisdom and Time

- Increase memory for names, illustrations and Scripture…
- Speak, write and relate (witness) through me—Take my weaknesses and make them my strengths
- Wisdom for whom to (and whom not to) spend time with and what to (and

what not to) spend time doing, watching, listening to and reading

- Do not let people or circumstances (equipment failure, problems, etc.) waste my time, drain my energy or divert me from fulfilling Your will
- Help me get the proper rest so I am refreshed and energized to do Your work
- Help me to look at my administrative responsibilities as Paul's tent making
- Multiply my time and energy 1000 fold to fulfill ministry and personal responsibilities
- Enable me to accomplish Your priorities and what You have called me to do
- Focus on Being more than Doing—Being a faithful witness physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and with my words and behavior
- Be centered on Scripture, prayer, meditating on the Word and praise

Conflicts and Confrontations

Before speaking or acting when verbal, physical or spiritual conflicts and confrontations rise up, help me to have:

1. Cool, calm, composure in the midst of confrontations
2. Wisdom and love of what to do or say
3. Courage, strength, anointing, authority and power
4. Victory as the end result

Walk in the Spirit

- Sensitivity, so You can speak to my heart what to say or do in any situation or bring to my remembrance a Scripture or Biblical principle to share
- Put Your words in my mouth—Empower me to accurately and boldly proclaim Your truth
- Let Your power be manifest to confirm and validate Your Word—"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (1 Corinthians 4:20)

Guard the Tongue

- No complaining, arguing or bickering (Philippians 2:14)
- No gossiping or hurtful words—Bless and not curse—"The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one

who opens wide his lips comes to ruin" (Proverbs 13:3)

- No repeating or talking too much—"Be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger" (James 1:19)
- No foolish talk (Ephesians 5:4)
- No bragging—"Let another praise you and not your own mouth; a stranger and not your own lips" (Proverbs 27:2)

Overcome Ten Things

It is my desire to live a pure life before You, so forgive me and help me by Your Spirit to:

1) Detoxify physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually

2) Fulfill my commitment to only **eat and drink that which is beneficial**

3) Keep my commitment to only **do, watch, listen to and read what is profitable**

4) Overcome **worry, doubt and unbelief** through unwavering faith and trust. Walk in Your peace. Rest in You knowing You have it all in control and are working it out for good and that the result will be ultimate victory

5) Conquer **fear** so that I fear no man, woman, beast, being or situation but only fear and reverence You and walk in Your courage, strength and power

Help me to trust You to defend me and fight my battles

Help me not to be a "man pleaser" but a "God fearer" (Proverbs 29:25; Matthew 22:16)

Help me to care more about Your opinion than people's—The only opinion that really matters is Yours—You are the One I stand before to give an account of my life

6) Replace **jealousy, envy, bitterness, revenge and greed** with love, forgiveness, joy, peace, hope and generosity

7) Replace **impatience, a bad attitude, murmuring, complaining and rebellion** with patience, endurance, perseverance, determination, faithfulness and an attitude of trusting, honoring and praising You no matter what

8) Burn out **pride, haughtiness, arrogance, bragging and boasting**—Let me never forget what I was before, where You brought me

from, what You have done for me and how You have humbled me when I became proud, so I will walk in humility and meekness before You

9) Do not let me tolerate **disobedience, sexual immorality and lust—**Help me to remember what You have taught me and the consequences of:

David—Son died, turmoil and tragedy in his life and family

Solomon—Foreign wives turned his heart after other gods so that the Lord tore the kingdom out of his son's hand and raised up an adversary against Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-14)

Samson—Lost his strength, eyes and his life

Let me never forget what You have taught me:

Not to look with lust—No good comes out of it

Look at them through Your eyes—Someone for whom You died, not someone to be used for selfish gratification

Walk in obedience, discipline and control

Desire You more than anyone or anything else and have a hunger and thirst and passion for You

10) Revitalize me spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically

Revive me **spiritually** by filling me with and leading me by Your Spirit so I will walk in the power of Your Spirit—Help me to hear, know and obey Your voice—Conform me to Your image (Romans 8:29)

May the fruit of Your Spirit be produced in my life: 1) love 2) joy 3) peace 4) patience 5) kindness 6) goodness 7) faithfulness 8) gentleness 9) self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)

May the gifts of the Spirit be in operation: 1) word of wisdom 2) word of knowledge 3) faith 4) healing 5) miracles 6) prophecy 7) distinguishing between spirits 8) different kinds of tongues 9) interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)

1) Let me not settle for imitation or counterfeit nor quench Your Spirit

2) Let me always remember that these gifts are not from me but from You

3) Let me realize that You determine when and how they operate, not me (Hebrews 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:11)

Renew my **mind (mentally and emotionally)** with Your Word (Romans 12:2) by having Your thoughts, attitudes, emotions, desires, goals, dreams and vision—"Taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5) and having the "mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16)

"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3, NKJV)

Rejuvenate my **body** by bringing healing and health—Grant me faith to believe You, wisdom of what to do, motivation to do it, opportunity and determination to fulfill it and victory through it

"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5, NASB)

Put us on the path to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual healing, health and vitality

It Is My Desire That You

- Enable me to honor and glorify You with every aspect of my life: physically (Romans 12:1), mentally and emotionally (Romans 12:2) and spiritually (Romans 8:29)
- Help me live by Your Biblical principles and reach my maximum potential
- Use me to turn the hearts of Your people back to You and inspire them to walk in faithfulness until You return
- Help me remain faithful to the end and hear You say, "Well done good and faithful servant…" Let me receive my praise from You (1 Corinthians 4:5)
- Let me not attempt to manipulate You into what I want or think You should be, but reveal Yourself to me as You are. I want to know You. Make known to me who You are by Your Word and by Your Spirit, then cause me to submit and be conformed to who You are and what You require of me.
- Revelation in the knowledge of You (Ephesians 1:17) so that I can know You more, love You deeper, serve You better and relate You effectively to others

- Give me knowledge, wisdom, insight, truth, understanding and discernment of Scripture, creation, life, health, science, apologetics, end times…
- Teach me to see from Your perspective and love the things You love and hate the things You hate
- Instruct me by Your Word that I might know and walk in Your ways and be pleasing in Your sight
- Provide Your presence, peace, power, protection and provision
- Give me a passion for You more than anything or anyone—A hunger and thirst for You more than a hunger and thirst for food and water
- May the invisible God of the Bible be clearly visible through my faith, words, behavior and lifestyle
- Let nothing come into our lives, family or ministry that does not bring honor and glory to You, advances Your kingdom, and results in good, blessing and victory
- Come Lord Jesus and establish Your kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy. End all profanity, blasphemy, murders, lies, thefts, sexual immorality,

sorcery, idolatry and worshipping demons.

- May all praise, honor and glory be given You now and evermore!

Family Prayer and Fasting List

- Salvation—All come to know You in a real and personal way as Savior and Lord
- Motivate them to walk in faithfulness to You and have a desire to study Your Word, pray and witness
- Keep them from falling away or being seduced from pure devotion to You
- Enable them to reach their maximum potential physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually
- Instill within them love, faith, courage, confidence, kindness, generosity, discipline, self-control, determination, discernment, humility and integrity
- Use our family as a powerful testimony to our extended families, community and world

- Anoint and bless them with skills and talents to use for Your glory
- Lead them to the school and university of Your choice
- Give them knowledge, wisdom and understanding
- May they have the friends of Your choice
- Grant them favor with their teachers, peers, coaches, employers…
- May they participate in the sports and activities of Your choice
- May they marry the person of Your choice, have the vocation of Your choice, live in the location of Your choice and be involved in the church and ministry of Your choice
- Help Karen and me to be godly influences to our family and to honor You in all things
- Bless all our marriages and keep us faithful to You and to each other
- Make our homes an oasis—Filled with Your presence, peace, praise, purity, protection, provision and power
- Motivate us to live healthy lifestyles and eat nutritiously, have positive

attitudes, unwavering faith and a vibrant, fulfilling relationship with You

- Put us on Your path to obtain healing and maintain health
- Protect us from sickness, disease, injuries, accidents, assaults, molestation…
- Protect our homes, property, vehicles…and use them for Your glory
- Grant me wisdom, discernment, anointing and authority to deal with any family issues or problems and when providing Biblical counsel
- Line up circumstances the way You want in our lives and families
- Coordinate our schedules and activities
- Empower us to fulfill Your will, accomplish Your purpose and honor You in all things
- Provide Your peace in knowing my wife, children and their spouses, grandchildren and other family members are in Your control and that You are working everything together for good and that the result will be ultimate victory
- Pray for each family member

Ministry Prayer and Fasting List

- Guide and direct this ministry by the leading of Your Spirit and according to the principles in Your Word
- Open doors no one can shut and shut doors no one can open
- Organize, structure and expand this ministry to accomplish Your will and purpose
- Use this ministry to turn the hearts of the people back to You and Your Word and motivate them to walk in faithfulness until You come

Inspire, anoint, bless, open doors and bear much fruit for Your glory through every aspect of this multifaceted ministry:

- Books, E-Books, Pamphlets, Tracts, Audio and Video Messages
- Crisis Intervention and Chaplain Ministry
- Holy Land Adventures
- Leadership Training
- Magazine Articles and Devotionals

- Military and Prison Ministry
- Missionary Outreaches
- Newsletters and E-Newsletters
- Prayer and Correspondence Ministry
- Radio Broadcasts, Minute Messages and Interviews on Radio and Television
- Research, Apologetics and Biblical Instruction
- School Assemblies—Elementary, Middle and High Schools
- Speaking Engagements
- Total Health and Fitness and Defense Clinics
- Translation and Printing of Our Books into Other Languages
- Ultimate Challenge Obstacle and Fitness Course
- Website, Blogs and Podcasts
- Witness Encounters and Street Ministry
- World Literature Outreach—Change the World with Your Change

Staff, Volunteers, Board of Directors, Board of Reference, Prayer Team and Supporters:

- Raise up staff and board who are faithful to You and Your Word and use them to fulfill Your purpose through this ministry
- Bless all BRM board, staff, volunteers, prayer intercessors and supporters for their generosity and faithfulness to You and this ministry and multiply it back to them 100 fold
- Keep them all physically and financially healthy so we may have the workers and funds to help fulfill the Great Commission before Jesus returns (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20)
- May all who have helped this ministry come to salvation and be welcomed into Your eternal kingdom because they accepted Christ as Savior and Lord and their names are written in the Book of Life—Let none be lost who have helped us in any way

Facilities and Equipment:

- Let Your love, presence, peace, praise, truth and joy permeate the ministry center
- Keep all guests safe at the ministry center and at ministry events…

- Protect our facilities, property, obstacle course, vehicles and equipment and keep them operating safely and efficiently

Finances, Stewardship and Integrity:

- As our Source, help us to trust You to provide the funds, facilities, vehicles and equipment needed for this ministry and for special outreaches and projects
- Speak to the hearts of the individuals, churches, businesses and organizations You would have to support this ministry and cause them to be sensitive and obedient concerning what to give or do
- Cause us to always be wise and faithful stewards with the finances, facilities, equipment and staff You have entrusted to us
- Preserve our integrity and testimony and keep this ministry always above reproach
- Multiply and maximize our time, energy, staff, finances, facilities, equipment and resources to touch countless lives in this area, throughout the nation and around the world (Acts 1:8)

- May we all be found faithful when You return
- Pray for board members, staff, volunteers, prayer team and supporters…

Final Thoughts

This book is not the last word on fasting. Search the Scriptures. Do further research for yourself. Consult a qualified health practitioner.

It is not my intention to give you professional health advice. Rather, I have presented a synopsis of what I have discovered in God's Word and what I have experienced. Fasting (along with earnest prayer and Bible study) is one of the best ways to discover God's will and live a victorious life of obedience. Through it are gained sensitivity and discernment. God has used them to transform my life, guide and direct me, and bring ultimate victory out of some apparently hopeless situations.

Final Exhortations

I hope you will separate yourself for a special time of seeking the Lord with all your heart through prayer, fasting and the study of His Word. Begin to apply the Biblical principles and truths on fasting to your life. You will reap tremendous benefits of a disciplined life: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

For More Information

Bill Rudge has produced numerous books, pamphlets and audio messages on a variety of timely topics. For a complete listing or a copy of his informative newsletter, visit www.billrudge.org or write to:

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Notes

Notes

Notes

Throughout the Old and New Testament

GOD'S PEOPLE FASTED.

They fasted when they were humbling themselves before the Lord. They fasted when they were confessing their sins and repenting. They fasted when they were mourning. They fasted when they faced crises and emergencies or suffered defeats. They fasted when they were seeking God's help or guidance. They fasted when they were given a special calling or were stepping out on a special mission. They fasted when they were earnestly praying and seeking the Lord with all their hearts.

Moses fasted. David fasted. Elijah fasted. Daniel fasted. Esther fasted. Nehemiah fasted. Jesus fasted. Paul fasted. And many throughout church history who impacted their world also fasted.

Practicing the ancient Biblical principles of fasting contained in this booklet greatly impacted Bill Rudge's life and ministry. Read it to discover how fasting can be of benefit to your spiritual life as well.

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